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## REVIEWS

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*The Principles of Sociology.* By EDWARD ALSWORTH ROSS. The Century Co., 1920. Pp. xviii+708.

Without slightest abatement of respect for the preparatory work that in the generation now passing has built up a meritorious sociological literature, I must confess the reaction that in this book sociology, as an exhibit of results in contrast with a discussion of methods, has at last arrived. Many men, widely scattered in time and space, have given more or less heed to the premonition that there is a point of view, if it could only be determined, from which instruction might be derived about essentials of human experience that the traditional sciences of society have overlooked. Since 1880 the number of men who have devoted themselves to search for this point of view, and to the development of a procedure appropriate to it as a point of departure, has increased at a rate approaching arithmetical proportion. Among these believers that the older social sciences had not fully exploited the evidence, profitable though thankless work was added to work year after year in locating a more promising base of operations and in elaborating a technique suited to the enterprise which the clearing outlook demanded. Incidental to this mostly methodological dead-work, many scholars who called themselves sociologists succeeded in bringing to light important facts and significant relationships of more or less permanent and general significance. These partial or tentative results, however, whether in one of the fields of concrete survey or in fundamentals, have accumulated at such widely separated spots that only a few specialists in social science have been able to grasp them in the aggregate, still less in correlation, or even to become distinctly aware of their existence.

Now comes a book, not of methods, but of findings. It does not attempt to sum up all the results of sociological analysis. It sets in systematic order a large body of perceptions which appeal to the author as of prime importance. He does not claim that he has finished the task of interpreting human experience. He does claim that his system of analysis is a valid interpretation in itself, however much more interpretation the facts may turn out to bear.

The book appeals to me as sufficient to convince all competent-minded persons not previously convinced that there are ranges of vital

human relationships which had almost wholly escaped the notice of the older types of social science. The life of men turns out to move in the course of incessant construction and destruction, arrangement and derangement of group situations. Sophistication about life consequently begins with ability to detect the phases of this process which are involved in the particular situations with which one is concerned.

Accordingly Professor Ross begins his eye-opening program by introducing the actors in the human drama as "The Social Population," to be made intelligible by certain traits in their conditions and composition. In Part II, under the title "The Social Forces," the author rapidly sketches the least exceptional influences that play within the orbits of human relationships. Then follows the bulk of the book—nearly five hundred pages—on "Social Processes." Part IV, on "Social Products" traverses more familiar ground, and Part V, "Sociological Principles," is the small fraction of the book which may interest the professional social scientist more than the layman.

In Part III, "Social Processes," Professor Ross introduces the reader to some forty types of reaction between people, any one of which may occur, after its kind, in the course of the most humdrum daily occupations no less than in exceptional and dramatic episodes. Essentially the same reaction, with differing proportions and modes of manifestation, may be present in a session of the Grand General Staff and in a Friends' Yearly Meeting; in the Council of Nicea and in the San Francisco Convention; in Buckingham Palace and in an east-side tenement. These are the things of which history is composed, but which the historians as a rule have notoriously neglected to notice. Professor Ross has not exhausted the catalogue of these typical reactions. On the contrary it seems to me that sociological analysis is likely to duplicate in its way the experience of astronomical technique in enlarging our conception of space. With each improvement of our technique, new vistas of human relationships uncatalogued and unexplored are appearing upon our field of vision.

The book serves two chief purposes, and they are as different as science and popularization. In the first place, no one preparing to be a professional social scientist, whatever his particular division of labor, can afford to be ignorant of it, or even only superficially acquainted with it. Henceforth the student of social science who has not assimilated it is undertrained. But a danger signal is necessary. For anyone with rudimentarily developed social intelligence the book is such luring reading that it might easily seduce into the illusion that by reading it

one makes one's self a sociologist. Eating a good dinner would be a co-ordinate claim to competence as a cook. Let no one flatter himself that one can do equally original and demonstrative sociological thinking of one's own without the tedious discipline which supplies the technique and forms the judgment.

On the other hand the book should be a great popular educator. Any high-school graduate with a mind for social relations, or anyone qualified to take a respectable part in trade-union discussions should find it gripping. It is essentially not a book for specialists but for everyone who is trying intelligently to find himself in the adventure of the common lot.

If the number of the *Journal* for which this notice is scheduled were not already overdue, I should probably yield to the temptation to accept some of the implicit challenges in the book to methodological discussion. While, as already implied, Professor Ross has kept technique well out of sight of the layman, the technologist will discover it, and the book is hardly likely to have a higher ratio of value for the non-professional public than it will have in provoking debate about method.

At present a single instance must suffice. The first sentence of the book speaks truth, viz., "The traits and tendencies of society are in no small degree determined by its human composition." It is equally true, however, that *the traits and tendencies of human composition are in no small degree determined by society*. To the layman in general and to most sociologists there is little or no choice between taking one's departure from the one of these propositions or from the other. To the suspicious critic of method the preference which Professor Ross shows indicates that, while he has been doing more than one man's share toward making the new procedure which we call by some variant of the name *group psychology*, that new procedure has not shifted his viewpoint as far as might be expected from the more conventional individualistic outlook. From beginning to end of the book Professor Ross is talking about things that are of, for, and by groups, but I realized with something like a shock that he does not begin to take groups as the direct subject of discourse until the forty-eighth chapter (p. 575).

In the present volume then Professor Ross is consistent with the judgment which he published fifteen years ago, that the *group* is not the true unit of investigation in sociology, but that the primordial fact is the *social process* (*Foundations of Sociology*, pp. 87-91). There is no doubt in my mind that social science as a whole would be abortive if

it were not served by techniques which begin their operations with phases of reality either genetically or logically antecedent to the human group. To my mind, however, the category "social process" is meaningless except as *the group in motion*. I cannot think of the group in motion without presupposing the group which is the subject of the motion. Accordingly, if I were composing a treatise on sociology today, my first sentence would be, *In the beginning is the group*. By "beginning" I should mean not the beginning of things, but the beginning of the strictly sociological aspect of things.

Such considerations as these, however, are specialists' stuff, and Professor Ross's book is something bigger than specialists' grist. It is a luminous revelation of realities of the common life. Sociologists may well be peculiarly proud of it, but it belongs in the larger literature which enlists all life and all the sciences of life to interpret life.

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*Bolshevik Russia*. By ÉTIENNE ANTONELLI. Translated from The French by CHARLES A. CARROLL. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1920. Pp. xi+307. \$2.00.

This is an attempt at a fair account of the rise of bolshevism and an appraisal of what it did in Russia up to May, 1918.

The detailed recital of events in chronological order is straightforward and clear but for the confusion of names of individuals and of parties and factions which are almost meaningless to an ordinary reader in this country. The psychological analysis of the Russian is interesting, but its over-simplification makes one feel that it is inadequate. After describing the great destruction and the steady disintegration of nearly all traces of Western civilization the final prophecy is of "a democracy which will not be made up of gradual conquests, plucked by shreds from a plutocratic bourgeoisie, but which will build itself up out of the very stuff of the people, a democracy which will not descend from the powerful ones to the people, as in all present forms of society, but which will rise voluntarily and surely from the unorganized and uncultivated folk to an organizing intelligence.

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